

# PLAIN TALKS

MAY 1981





# MAIL BOX

## THE COVER

Scott Latinis and James Turner are two Gulf Staters who spend many of their weekends leaping from airplanes.

But the two insist they're not crazy — just part of a trend toward skydiving as a hobby. In fact, Latinis says skydiving is among the safest of sports.

The cover photo was shot by *Plain Talks* Correspondent Joe Russian, who interviewed, then photographed, the two Beaumont Computer Applications Department employees. A third employee from that department — David Petkovsek — also skydives.

Malcolm Williams  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas  
Dear Mr. Williams:

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the assistance which Gulf States rendered in the rapid energizing of the Alligator Substation at West Hackberry. Your on-site crew provided the type of rapid response necessary to quickly iron out all of the "bugs" and get the system working.

Of special note is the performance of your Mr. Bob Derby (substation foreman) and Mr. Chester Landry (crew foreman). They developed and maintained an excellent working relationship with our electrical engineer, Steve Hodges. By the rapid response and cooperation of these men, we were able to energize on April 28, three days ahead of schedule. Thanks for a job well done.  
Sincerely,  
John Small  
Project Manager  
Parsons-Gilbane

Wayne Hiter  
Gulf States Utilities  
Baton Rouge, La.  
Dear Mr. Hiter:

We are excited that over 1,000 Girl Scouts and members of their families completed the recent Energy Watch program developed by your consumer information services department.

The commitment of Gulf States to provide quality education for the energy consumer was very evident. The demonstrations given by Jamie Watkins to our girls and leaders were excellent.

Your continued support of Girl Scouting throughout the years has had a very positive impact. We appreciate your assistance and your interest in the youth of our community.

Sincerely,  
Sheila S. Kimbro  
Public Relations  
Audubon Girl Scout Council

Gulf States Utilities  
Madisonville, Texas  
Dear Sir:

My wife and I wish to express to each of you involved our sincere appreciation for the immediate response to our request for restoration of service immediately following the twister strike on February 10.

The trauma of the situation was certainly eased by the assurances that service would be restored before night and it was. It was a cold, wet, nasty day with debris scattered all around the work area, but the crew repaired the severed wires and restored service in great good humor. Even our shattered wall seemed less menacing by electric light as opposed to flashlight.

Ever since we have been at this location, the service has been excellent. This particular incident was super excellent — and we thank you.

Sincerely,  
John C. Webb

## PLAIN TALKS

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### Director-Employee Information/Media Services

Kim McMurray

#### Editor:

Susan Gilley

#### Correspondents:

Adelaide Bankston

Connie Herford

Fred Jones

Les Jones

Helen Kennedy

Earl Landry

Edith Patterson

Anna Raymond

Rose Reeves

Casey Richert

Joe Russian

D. W. Rutherford

Shivaun Tessier

David Thornhill

Doris Wallace

Nina Wiley

Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-change forms (GSU0012-00-79) and return them to the mailroom in the Wilson Building. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.



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## Alford to head new subsidiary

Prudential Drilling Co. has named Zeb D. Alford of Hollis, N.H., president and a director of Prudential. Gulf States has signed a contract to acquire the Houston-based drilling company.

Alford, a native of McComb, Miss., was president of New England Energy Inc. of Westborough, Mass., formed in 1974 as the energy subsidiary of New England Electric Systems.

Gulf States and Prudential signed a stock exchange agreement on May 6 in which GSU agreed to exchange 588,000 shares of its common stock for all of Prudential's common stock, a transaction with an estimated value of nearly \$7 million. (See related commentary on page 19.)

Prudential is involved in natural gas exploration in Southeast Texas. It was responsible for the discovery of Elwood field in Chambers County in which it has about a 5.5 percent interest.

In addition, Prudential has interests in 26 other producing wells in Texas and Louisiana and holds oil and gas leases in Southeast Texas.

The company will maintain its Houston office. Prior to necessary regulatory approval and final closing, George A. Dishman Jr. will become chairman of the Prudential board. Gerry Lightsey and Faye Powell will remain as officers in the company.

Alford attended Louisiana State University and Tulane University before graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1947. He received his master's

degree in operations research from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., and is a graduate of the National War College.



## Crews replaced old hardware

Gulf States crews, trucks and equipment lined Highway 87 along the Bolivar Peninsula April 27 and 28 when the company replaced corroded hardware on utility poles. Contract crews assisted GSU in the large-scale undertaking.

By concentrating 55 three- and four-man crews on the 69-kilovolt lines that run alongside the beach highway, GSU completed the operation in only two days. Normally, the procedure might be expected to take several months to accomplish.

The crews worked on the lines from the point where Highway 124 intersects Highway 87 to an area between Rollover Pass and Crystal Beach.

Non-corrosive parts and fittings for insulators replaced the corroded galvanized steel hardware on the utility poles. Because of extra resistance to corrosive effects of salt buildup, the new insulators will last longer than galvanized hardware.

Hardware on the beach service area's high-voltage lines was last replaced in the early 1960s, following Hurricane Carla.

## Industries cited for conservation

Representatives of 17 Golden Triangle industrial plants accepted National Energy Watch awards May 12 for achieving significant progress in energy conservation.

To earn the award, each plant reduced energy use by at least 20 percent in 1979 or 1980, compared with the amount of energy the plant used in 1972. Energy use was measured by the number of BTUs the plant used per unit of output or service.

The N.E.W. conservation program is sponsored by Edison Electric Institute, the association of investor-owned electric utilities. Standards for measuring improvements in industrial energy efficiency were set by EEI and the Department of Energy.

The N.E.W. plaques were awarded at a meeting of the Golden Triangle Energy Society at the Business & Professional Men's Club. GSU's Beaumont Division Vice President Arden Loughmiller and Port Arthur Division Vice President Ted Meinscher presented the awards.

Plants that received awards May 12 included the Gulf Oil Port Arthur refinery, the American Petrofina Port Arthur refinery, B. F. Goodrich Chemical Group's Port Neches plant and Chemical Division of Orange, Arco Polymers Inc. Port Arthur plant and the Velsicol Chemical Corp. Beaumont plant.

Others being honored with plaques are Independent Refinery's Winnie plant, the Gulf Oil Chemicals Co. Orange plant, Firestone's Orange plant, Pennwalt's Beaumont plant, the Mobil Chemical Co. LDPE Plant in Beaumont, PPG Industries' Beaumont plant, Goodyear's Beaumont chemical plant, Bethlehem Steel Corp. Beaumont yard and Kirby Forest Industries Inc. plants in Silsbee and Bon Wier.



# River Bend Station

## Applying for an Operating License

When Gulf States delivered its 20-volume, 9,000-page operating license application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on April 24, it culminated more than a year's work compiling the massive document.

As Eddie Grant, licensing coordinator, explains, "We're now preparing for the next 30-33 month effort which will consist of answering NRC questions and participating in public hearings."

Currently the NRC is reviewing the document for completeness — a process that could take up to three months. Then the NRC will begin an intensive technical review of the application, which probably will take between 18 and 24 months. Six to 10 months will then be allowed for technical hearings in Washington, D.C., and public hearings of various types near the site of the nuclear plant.

Once the application is docketed, the NRC must notify the public of the action, thus opening the way for public participation. It will take about 18 to 24 months for the NRC to public its Safety Evaluation Report and Final Environmental Statement. It is quite likely that it could be 2½ to three years before an operating license is issued.

Since the company was required to submit 10 copies of the one-volume application, 15 sets of the 15-volume Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR), 20 sets of the three-volume Environmental Report and 20 copies of the one-volume antitrust review, the documentation delivered to the NRC amounted to about 173,000 pages.

As might be expected, dozens of people had to assist with the monumental task of putting

together the application — including GSUsers from other departments, Stone and Webster Engineering Corp. employees, General Electric personnel and outside consultants. Stone and Webster is architect/engineer and general contractor for the River Bend project, while GE is supplying the boiling water reactor for the facility.

Among staffers of the River Bend Nuclear Group assisting the Nuclear Licensing Department in assembling the application were those assigned to other departments within Technical Programs, the Health Physics and Chemistry Group, Plant Technical Staff, Quality Assurance, Startup and Test, Project Engineering and the site Training Department.

Other Gulf States employees making contributions to the undertaking included those with expertise in the areas of System Engineering, Transmission Design, Financial Services, Right-of-Way, Rates, Consumer Services, Power Interconnections, Risk Management and Security.

Since Cajun Electric Power Cooperative owns a 30 percent share of the 940-megawatt River Bend Station Unit 1, the co-op supplied antitrust and financial information.

In order to tender the application to the NRC by April, the Nuclear Licensing staff put in many 60-hour work weeks from mid-November 1980 until this April. (The NRC had actually discouraged the company from submitting the application for at least another two years, claiming the River Bend construction schedule was too optimistic. How-

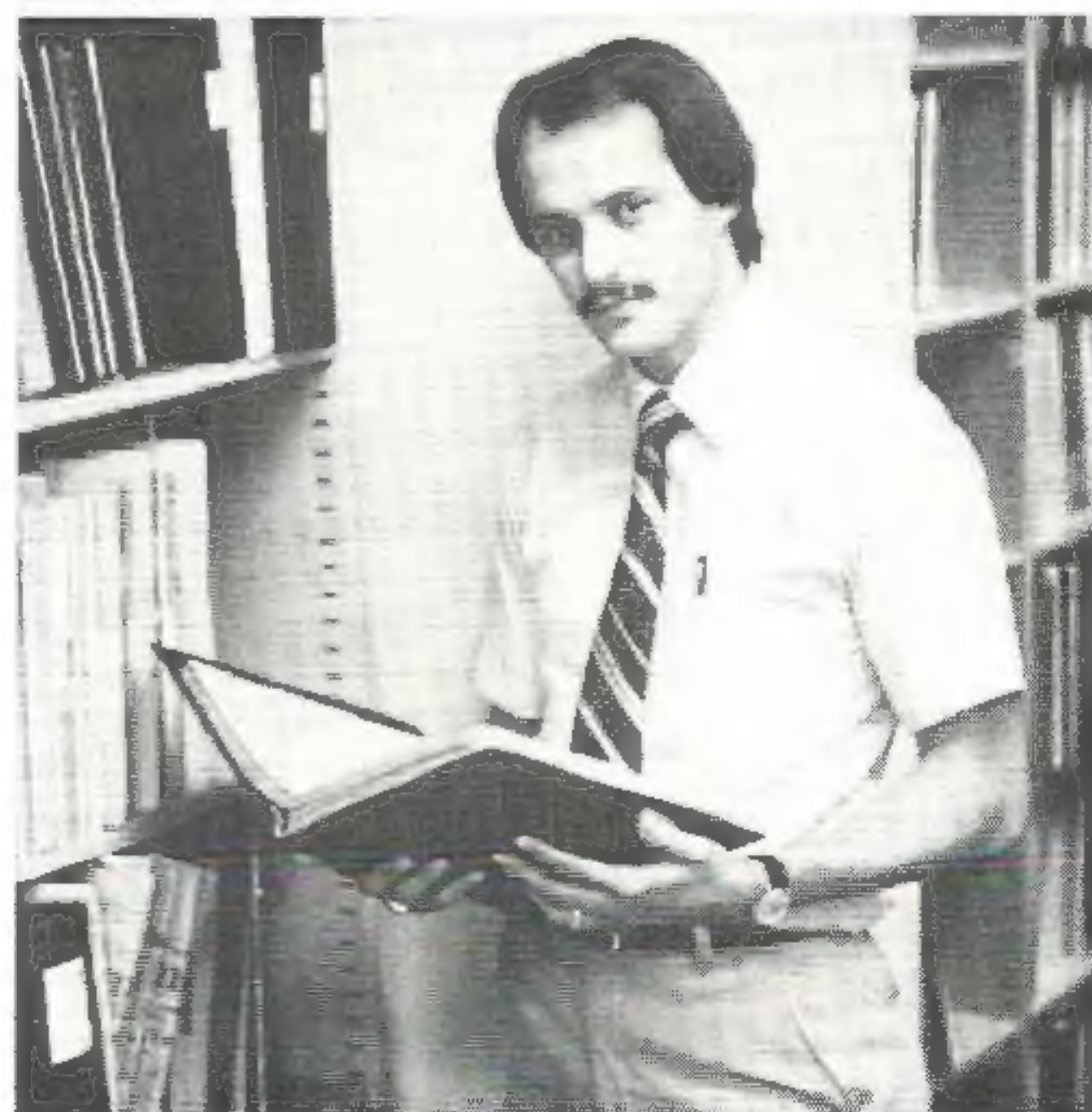
(Continued on page 6.)



Bill Reed



James Cook



Rick King



## Applying for an operating license



*Bert Yates, Eddie Grant*

ever, company officials contend the Nuclear Construction Stabilization Agreement, combined with the unique rolling four-10s work schedule, will enable GSU to meet its schedule. Recent emphasis by the NRC to process applications in a more timely manner points up the importance of the submittal at the time it took place.)

According to Bill Reed, director of nuclear licensing, certain employees were responsible for collecting the information for particular portions of the application. James Cook, lead environmental analyst, compiled the Environmental Report; Eddie Grant and Bert Yates, licensing engineer, compiled the FSAR; and Rick King, licensing engineer, coordinated the compilation of both the application document and the antitrust document.

River Bend is now being built under a construction permit issued in March 1977. The application for that license was submitted in late 1973. Part of the task facing those responsible for preparing the operating license application was to update infor-

mation included in the Environmental Report and Preliminary Safety Analysis Report that made up the construction permit application.

Cook, a Lamar University environmental science graduate who has been with Gulf States since 1974, says much of the information included in the Operating License Stage Environmental Report was provided by Stone and Webster and Louisiana State University. GSU personnel reviewed the suggested text for applicability to River Bend Station, then returned the draft to Stone and Webster for printing. Cook admits that at times over the past year he felt like a "publisher" himself. "I was always editing copy," he recalls.

The Environmental Report covers the geological, hydrological, sociological, meteorological, thermal, radiological, biological and chemical effects of a nuclear plant on the St. Francisville area.

King, a recent graduate of Oklahoma State University who has been with Gulf States for about a year, compiled the anti-

trust and application volumes. Much assistance was provided by Mark Wetterhahn of the Conner and Moore law firm in Washington, D.C. The application contained general information about Gulf States, information about the ownership of River Bend and GSU financial information relating to the operation of the plant.

The antitrust document was an update of the information provided with the construction permit. A listing of the Southwest Power Pool members and their second coordination agreement was attached.

Grant, who came to GSU from Arkansas Power and Light, was responsible for coordinating the FSAR effort. Yates, a nuclear engineering graduate of the University of Missouri at Rolla, assisted Grant. The FSAR differed significantly from the preliminary report because it provided detailed information about the plant that was not available when the construction permit was being sought. "This effort," Yates insists, "gives you a chance to get acquainted with just about every aspect of building a nuclear plant and getting it on line."

According to Reed, Nuclear Licensing Department employees feel a great deal of pride in having completed this formal submittal.

"However, we still have a lot of work ahead of us before the actual issuance of the operating license," Reed points out.



**Boy builds everything from the ground up!**

# Pace Construction Company

By Adelaide Bankston  
Plain Talks Correspondent

The construction business can be both fascinating and risky, but 13-year-old Bobby Pace created his own little company anyhow.

Actually, Bobby, whose father is a first class mechanic in the sub-station department in Baton Rouge, built a tiny construction site featuring ceramic bulldozers, dumptrucks and other breakable equipment.

Bobby's creation brought the young Denham Springs resident a first place and best in division prize during the 23rd Annual South-Central Ceramic Show in Baton Rouge March 20-22.

A sign erected at one corner of his dirt-covered construction site, which is about the size of a coffee table, identified the territory as belonging to "Pace's Construction." The youth, who turned 13 on April 12, reveals that he designed, molded, carved and fired more than 30 pieces for the site, including bulldozers, dump trucks, drag lines, back hoes, 18-wheelers, office buildings, pylons and barricades. The biggest pieces were only about two inches long, while smaller pieces were no more than a half-inch high.

"I had molds for some parts of the pieces," he explains, "but mostly I had to create my own designs by modifying some molds and carving the wet clay."

Although the Denham Springs Junior High student learned the art of ceramics from his mother Rose, she insists, "I didn't really teach him — he just picked it up on his own and has surpassed me in his skill."

Bobby's inspiration came from real-life construction workers. "I got interested in construction equipment when I watched workmen build the road by our house," he recalls, adding, "also we have some good friends with a construction business and I like to watch the machinery they use."

Bobby may have inherited his craftsmanship from his father who recently built a wood-burning stove from materials salvaged from a discarded water heater. The elder Pace also built an air brush compressor that his wife and Bobby use to paint some of their ceramic pieces. So far, younger brothers Jay, 11, and Pete, 10, have not begun working with ceramics.

Bobby admits his hobby is time

consuming. He began work on his prize-winning creation last November and finished just before the late March show. According to his mother, "Most of the pieces must be fired and refired, stained and glazed. It is very time consuming, but Bobby loves it."

The young teenager is already planning his next project — construction of some highline towers. He wants to build "the kind you see by the river, with wires and electric bells," he says. Since most metals will melt in a kiln, Bobby plans to use michrome wire and coat it with ceramics.

"It will be a lot of detail work," he admits, "and it will take a long time, but I'm going to give it a try."



*A first place and a best of division prize helped put a big smile on 13-year-old Bobby Pace's face this March when he entered his ceramic construction site in a ceramic show.*





*Fred Repper, vice president-Public Affairs, presents an award check to Ken Haynie (right).*



*Lewis Guthrie, engineering manager, presents an award check to Franklin H. "Butch" Suitt (left).*

# Employees Benefit from Suggestion Program

By early May, 12 Gulf Staters had received either cash or safety certificates for having proposed changes that would help the company save money or time.

Heading the cash recipients was \$500 award winner Ken Haynie of Public Affairs. Next was \$250 prize winner Franklin H. "Butch" Suitt of Engineering Design. Both are from Beaumont.

Amounts of up to \$500 are awarded, based on the worth to the company of a particular suggestion.

When the Employee Suggestion Program was announced last fall, Mike Durham, suggestion committee coordinator, explained that the new program — which awards employees for original ideas and suggestions — was to operate separately from the Action Needed Program. That program aims at solving local problems in T&D service centers and power plants.

Haynie suggested that the company send its annual report as third class bulk mail rather than in individual envelopes as first class mail. Switching to the new

system saved the company in excess of \$45,000 on an annual basis, it was estimated. Haynie is graphics coordinator for the Public Affairs Department.

Suitt, a senior draftsman, suggested establishing a special structure book that would feature reduced copies of plans for non-standard transmission lines. It was calculated that implementation of Suitt's suggestion would result in a net savings of \$5,106 for the first year alone. His award-winning suggestion was viewed as a way to improve productivity, save time, money and materials and eliminate needless searching through microfilm cards and files for particular structures. It was also seen as a way to avoid drawing special structures that had already been drawn.

V. J. Olivier of Lafayette was given \$100 for his suggestion dealing with a new design for hot stick "heads." Clyde Wilson of Choctaw service center also received \$100 for recommending standardization of hand signals for flagging and instructing operators.

Twenty-dollar awards were presented to Charles Loewenthal of Choctaw service center and Carl Ray Bradley of Nelson Station.

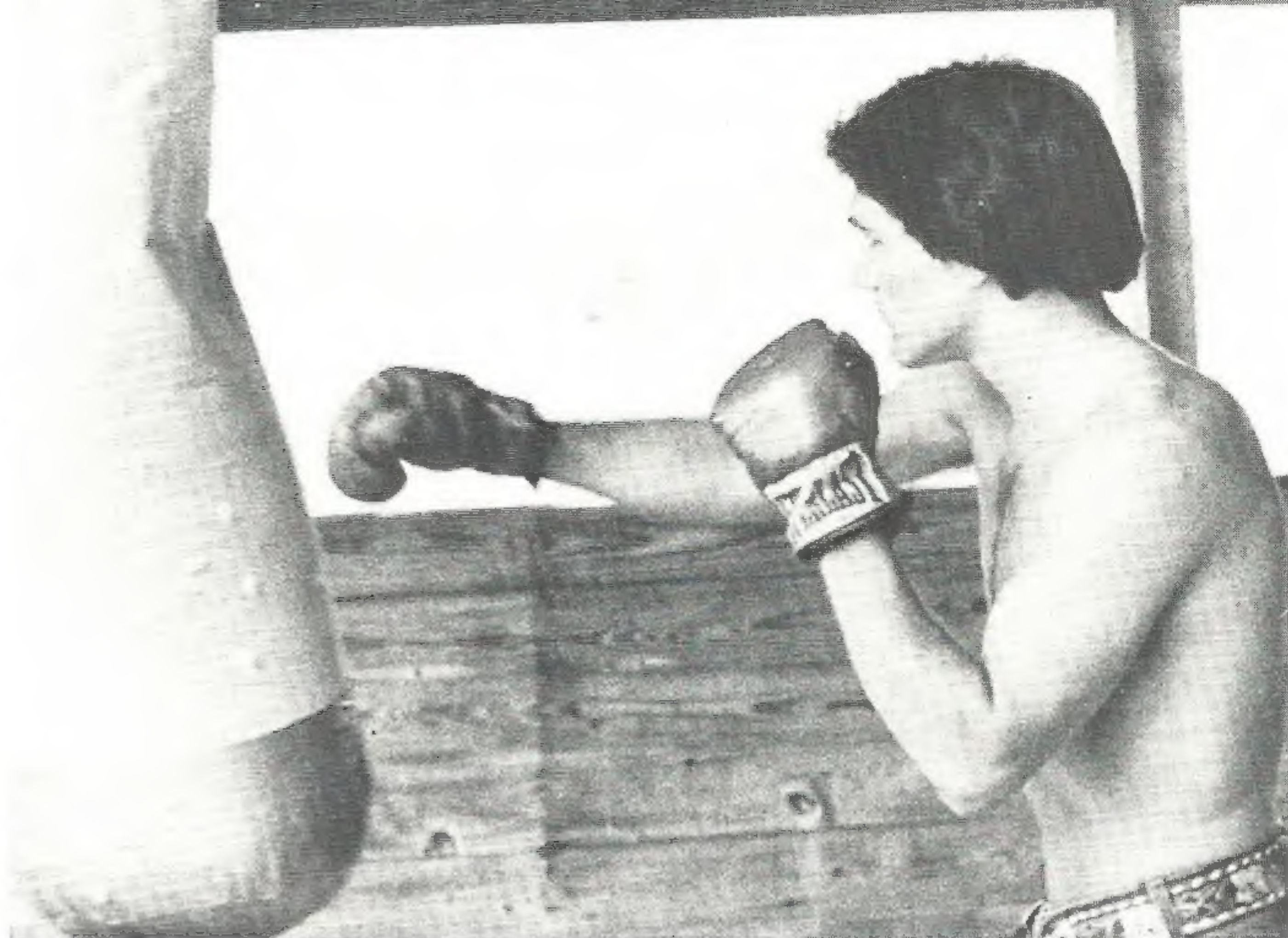
Safety certificates, with values totaling from \$10 to \$50, were awarded to John Adams of New Caney, Claude Patin of the Lafayette service center, Mary King of Beaumont, Opal Temple of Baton Rouge, Conrad Kincaid of the Beaumont service center and Alicia Taylor, who was formerly employed in Beaumont.

Suggestions formally submitted to personnel representatives on GSU Employee Suggestion Form No. 4597-00-80 are reviewed by Durham and fellow committee members Jim Aldridge, vice president-human resources, and Joe Bondurant, executive vice president-operations. A department head also sits on the committee when the suggestion concerns his department.



# A Family Tradition

by Susan Gilley  
Plain Talks Editor



For 23-year-old Jim Harris, learning to box was almost as natural as learning to walk and talk.

"If you were a Harris, you had to fight," the lithe young meter reader explains. When he was 16, Jim was Golden Gloves amateur boxing champion for the state of Arkansas.

Years ago, Jim's father, Henry Harris Sr. was middleweight champion of the U.S. Army and later heavyweight champion of the South. Now 72, the elder Harris lives in Arkansas, which was his birthplace, leaving his children in the Conroe area. The family still maintains a ring in an old shed on family property near Cut and Shoot — a ring that Henry Sr. bought from Madison Square Garden about 25 years ago. Each of his four sons has carried on the family tradition of boxing. The family also includes four daughters.

Jim's oldest brother Roy, who is 25 years older than the youngest Harris, fought Floyd Patterson in a bout for the heavyweight title of the world. Young Jim, then only 3 months old, was an uninterested spectator among the crowd at that bout. Henry Jr., called "Little Henry" by family members, was the winner of the national Golden Gloves competition. As a professional, in 1960 he fought Mohammed Ali — then

still known as Cassius Clay — in an exhibition match.

Another older brother, Tobe, fought more professional fights than any of the Harrises. Jim also claims that Tobe suffered a streak of bad luck during his boxing career. "He would have fought Archie Moore for the light heavyweight title, but he injured himself while horseback riding."

Jim moved from Conroe to Arkansas with his parents after finishing the seventh grade at Crockett Junior High School. He married shortly after high school graduation and soon returned to Conroe for a job as a meter reader with Gulf States. A couple of years later, Jim recalls that he began feeling as if he might have "abandoned" his father by moving away, so he returned to the Ozarks for a job as a meter reader with Arkansas Power and Light. He moved back to Conroe about 1½ years later, resuming his old job with GSU.

Over the past few months, Jim has participated in several Houston area matches. He works out every day except Sunday, pointing out that the only requirement his often-worried mother made of her sons was that they "make sure you're in shape when you fight."

In addition to working out, Jim also assists youngsters interested in picking up tips about boxing.

"Just before the Golden Gloves every year, a lot of high school kids will come out here and decide they're going to box," Jim comments. "Some will last a couple of days and some a week. Probably only one out of 10 will like it enough to stick with it," according to Jim's calculations.

What discourages so many eager young would-be boxers?

"It's really hard work," Jim insists, adding, "I've had some friends who played football and basketball who would get to boxing and talk about how it tired them out. You get tired quicker boxing than any other sport."

Still, he notes, "The little kids — those about 9 or 10 years old — are the ones who really like it."

In hopes of perhaps someday turning professional, Jim himself picks up boxing cues from Conroe resident Mark Tessman, who once fought a standout named Bob Foster for the light heavyweight title.

He relies on his three brothers for most of his advice, however.

And he admits that his bloodline may have given him a slight edge where publicity is concerned.

"I don't really have to make a name for myself — my dad and my brothers have already done that. All I have to do is get there and have a good fight," he asserts.



# Skydivers: 'Surrounded



David Petkovsek

Both Scott Latinis and James Turner appear sensible, and neither seems unduly depressed.

Nevertheless, the two young Computer Applications Department employees regularly throw themselves off the side of a moving aircraft.

The two Gulf Staters are among growing numbers of skydiving enthusiasts who claim that their hobby is among the safest of sports.

About 60 jumps after making his first leap, Latinis, an associate systems analyst, says he'll not discourage his daughter Stacie, now only 11 months old, if she wants to take up skydiving when she reaches 16.

Latinis made his first jump on May 18, 1980, after having undergone a 1½-day preparation seminar — despite the fact that his wife Vickie was then about eight months pregnant and had misgivings about the adventure.

Latinis admits that he had doubts of his own, some of which

persisted right up until the last minute. "Stepping out of an airplane into a great void that has solid ground at the bottom is not a very natural act," he concedes ruefully.

Although Turner, an assistant systems analyst, says he had "thought about" attempting skydiving for years, he never took any action until Latinis told him how much he was enjoying the sport.

During the summer, however, Turner says he was more interested in "spending my money by going to the beach, taking trips and on water sports." By August, though, he had saved the \$90 required to undergo the lessons and make the first jump. Like many other skydivers, Turner remembers the exact date of his first jump.

"I made that first jump on Aug. 24, 1980, and I made my second jump the same day," he recalls, asserting, "My first couple of jumps were the most exciting



Scott Latinis makes a point, while David Petkovsek (left) and James Turner model skydiving gear.



# d by a Beautiful Silence'

by Joe Russian  
Plains Talks Correspondent

experiences I have ever encountered."

According to Latinis, the training that precedes a skydiver's first jump is very thorough. "It helped to build my confidence in the equipment and my own ability," he says. The initial lessons included learning how to properly exit the airplane, how to recognize properly and improperly inflated parachutes, what to do if a parachute failed to inflate properly, how to steer the parachute and how to land safely.

With clarity, Latinis mentally retraces his first jump. "I was sitting close to the window and watched the earth fall away as we took off."

He admits asking himself "What am I doing here?" several times as the aircraft climbed to 2,800 feet, the altitude from which he would be jumping. When Latinis' turn came, he climbed out on the step, after checking his static line one final time to make certain it was securely connected.

"I steadied myself on the step and looked straight ahead, as we'd been taught in class," he continues. "As I climbed out on the step, it seemed as if all fear left me. I was thinking about what I had to do. Before I had time to realize that I was really out on the step of a flying airplane, the instructor yelled 'Go' and I jumped backward."

As he had been coached, Latinis began counting, "Arch thousand, 2,000, 3,000." Although he was supposed to count by thousands to 5,000, the young Vidor resident recalls stopping earlier and looking for the open parachute. Once he saw the open chute, which he described as "beautiful — orange and white and brown and green," Latinis began to notice the quietness.

"The plane was already gone. There were no sounds coming from below — only the sound of the wind. This was one of the most peaceful experiences I've ever known. It seemed to me to be well worth the anxiety and money," he adds.

Turner experienced the same sensation during his first jump. By the time he had yelled 5,000 during his fall, he felt the full thrust of the inflated canopy. "As I looked at the full green parachute, I noticed the beautiful silence that surrounded me," the young man says.

Now Turner is as enthusiastic about skydiving as Latinis, who has persuaded yet another Beaumont GSUer — David Petkovsek, also of Computer Applications — to take up the sport.

By jumping with several others, Turner and Latinis are able to cut costs — mainly for fuel for

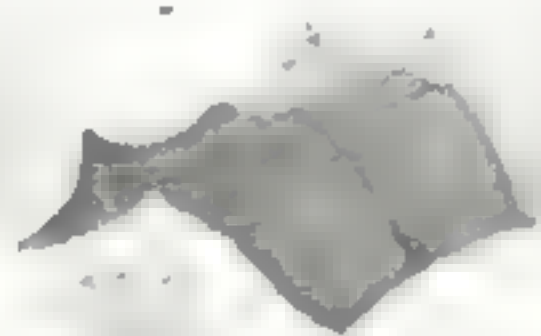
the aircraft — attached to their favorite sport.

According to Turner, "You usually get four jumpers on a load. We use a Cessna 182, although you can go to larger jump zones and jump out of larger planes."

During the recent Neches River Festival, Turner scored second place in accuracy in a skydiving competition held at Beaumont Municipal Airport. He, Latinis and two others scored third place in a team competition during the festival.

By Turner's estimation, a skydiver who owns the equipment can expect to spend about \$7 per jump.

And Turner, who is single, says skydiving has attracted the attention of another member of his family. His sister, an amateur photographer, "thinks it's a beautiful sport," he reveals.



*Falling, falling, falling . . .*



# SERVICE AWARDS

**40**  
years



**R. J. Bonnette Jr.**  
Electric T&D  
Baton Rouge



**J. T. Doiron**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont



**C. W. Stracener**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont

**30**  
years



**D. W. Bescher**  
Electric T&D  
Port Arthur



**Robert G. Domingue**  
Electric T&D  
Lafayette



**M. L. Rushing**  
Electric T&D  
Sulphur



**Thomas D. Williams**  
Division Accounting  
Jennings

**20**  
years



**Betty C. Bass**  
Engineering Design  
Beaumont

**10**  
years



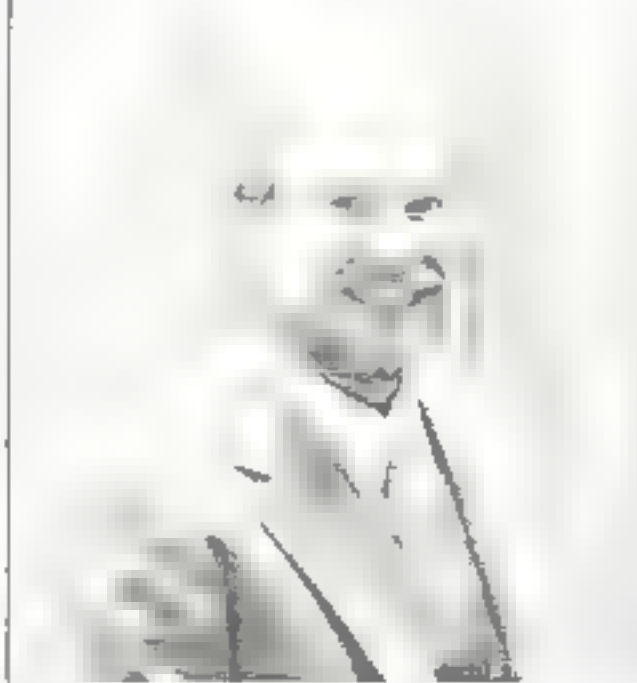
**John H. Anderson**  
Electric T&D  
Cleveland



**Norman R. Lofland**  
Electric T&D  
Navasota



**Nancy W. Thibodaux**  
Electric T&D  
Orange



**William T. Walkoviak**  
Electric T&D  
Navasota



# RETIREE UPDATE

## Crawford addresses Beaumont retirees

About 130 persons, including 125 dues-paying members of the Beaumont Division Sideliners Club, turned out for an April 24 meeting featuring GSU Board Chairman Don Crawford as guest speaker.

Among those attending were the club officers and board members shown in the accompanying picture.



They are (front row, left to right) Jerry Stokes, activity committee chairman; Mildred Osborne, secretary-treasurer; A. B. Wilson, program committee co-chairman; (back row, left to right) Ralph Spafford, service and information committee chairman; Bill Buckley, vice president and *Plain Talks* correspondent; Victor Gayle, president; and Vic Faver, program committee co-chairman.

## Meeting held in Lafayette

Lake Charles Division retirees got together for a chicken barbecue luncheon in the Lafayette employee assembly building on April 16th.

Walter House, chapter president, commended fellow members for active participation during recent meetings. He termed members' suggestions as "very helpful to our group."

Libby Simonson, the wife of retired GSUer Fritz Simonson, has been named *Plain Talks* correspondent for the Lake Charles Division Sideliners.

The group is the oldest of all the retiree clubs, having recently celebrated its 10th birthday.

## Officers named in Baton Rouge



Baton Rouge Sideliners have named Cyril Dominguez as president of their newly-formed group.

Shown with Dominguez (far right) during an April 8 luncheon are Kenny Jumel, vice president, and Dorothy Sanchez, secretary-treasurer.

## Retiree's wife chairs club

Hursel Long, the wife of retiree Paul Long of Conroe, has been named chairman of the Western Division retiree club.

She's a retired nurse and hospital executive. Her husband retired in October, 1968, as station operator and line dispatcher for what was then the Navasota Division.

About a dozen retirees have paid membership fees for the new group. The next event will be a picnic in July at the employee pavilion at Lewis Creek Station near Conroe.

## Dates given for retirements

Among those joining the ranks of Gulf States Utilities retirees will be Joseph J. Charleville, equipment operator at Willow Glen, and Louis Gradnigo of Lake Charles, both of whom were to retire June 1.

Retiring May 1 was Robert J. Waltrip, former utility serviceman in Jennings.

## Three retirees die in May

Three retirees died in May.

They were Robert E. Compton of Lafayette, who is survived by his wife Johnie; Virginia C. Welsh of Beaumont; and James W. Hebert of Beaumont, who is survived by his wife Lois.





## Petitjean given lifesaving award

Chris Petitjean, Lafayette transmission and distribution apprentice, was recently awarded the President's Lifesaving Award by GSU President Norman Lee for having saved his grandmother's life.

Petitjean resorted to the Heimlich maneuver to keep his grandmother from choking to death after some food became lodged in her throat.

Attending the award presentation for Petitjean (shown second from right) were (from left) Mike Durham, manager-occupational health and safety; Petitjean's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Petitjean of Conroe; his wife, Lynette; and Lee.

Petitjean's father is also a Gulf States employee.

## Utility man invents device for salvage

Glynn Beck, a utility man in the Lake Charles T&D Line Department, has invented a device that permits salvaging wire from rotten wooden reels.

The device has already saved the company \$3,000 worth of wire.

Such salvage was previously impossible because "payout" reels have horizontal bars running through the center of them. Beck's invention — a new payout reel that supports the weight of the wire with a steel turntable — is designed with a vertical shaft through the hub of the reel.

The new turntable has a one-inch plate supported on four steel casters which allow it to turn. An asbestos brake band is used to hold tension on the wire as it is pulled off. Used in conjunction with some sort of pulling rig, the invention enables salvaging of wire from wooden reels in just about any condition.

Over the past two years, the Lake Charles department estimates that it lost about \$2,500 in wire that could not be recovered from the old-style damaged reels. Beck's device was built at a cost of \$200 and has already salvaged \$3,000 worth of wire.

By Edith Patterson  
Plain Talks Correspondent



## Conroe hosts energy workshop

An industrial energy workshop geared toward small manufacturers was held in the auditorium of GSU's Western Division headquarters Thursday, May 7, reports Dick Landry, industrial engineer and supervisor of consumer information services.

The energy efficiency workshop was jointly sponsored by GSU and the Texas Industrial Commission. Speakers included Dr. Richard Bywaters, president of Bywaters & Associates Consulting Engineers, Pat Payne of the Texas Engineering Extension Service, and Jack Schultz, energy utilization specialist with the Texas Industrial Commission.

Also speaking was Bob Sigsbee (shown standing in the picture), Western Division consumer service representative, who discussed "Low-Cost and No-Cost Energy Conservation Opportunities."



## Kaulfus finds missing blimp

Through a combination of events, Gulf Stater Jane Kaulfus received a \$100 check for locating an advertising blimp missing from a downtown Beaumont automobile dealership.

Mrs. Kaulfus, who is a stenographer, reports that she was driving home to Nederland following a trip to Silsbee when she heard a radio announcement about the missing blimp and the prize money. Once she was home, she casually mentioned the announcement to her husband Mark, who said he knew just where the blimp was.

Kaulfus had noticed the big balloon in a tree near Cardinal Drive as he was returning home from work. The couple went to the site and Mrs. Kaulfus retrieved the blimp.

Mrs. Kaulfus said the adventure took place April 30th, shortly after a storm hit the area and loosened the blimp.

## Rice honored for safety

Raymond Rice, lineman-second class in Lafayette, was named Safety Employee of the Month of May for the T&D group in Lafayette.

According to *Plain Talks* correspondent Helen Kennedy, Rice was recognized for promoting good safety practices on the job.



## Magazine staffer dies in May

George E. Weathers, a *Plain Talks* correspondent, died May 17 in a Baton Rouge hospital following an automobile accident. He was 38.

An employee at the Choctaw service center, he was a steward for IBEW Local Union No. 2286.

Survivors include his wife, Barbara G. Weathers of Baton Rouge; two daughters, Emily Marie Weathers and Wendy Renee Weathers, both of Baton Rouge; one son, George Edward Weathers Jr. of Baton Rouge; his mother, Hazel G. Weathers of Gretna; one sister, Julie W. Spears of Gretna; and two brothers, Joseph H. Weathers of Metairie and Carroll Weathers.



## Gradnigo reports fishing trip

A Lake Charles employee and his friend came back home with a big string of white perch after a recent fishing trip.

Making the March 15 fishing trip were (from left) Louis Gradnigo, building and grounds maintenance man, and his friend, Elliot Sterling.



## Champagne given promotion dinner

When Jim Champagne was promoted to manager-fuel services recently, his co-workers honored him with a dinner.

Champagne was previously director-mechanical engineering in Power Plant Engineering.

Shown in the picture (from left to right) are Jim Mutch, Ken Richardson, Janna Caywood, Champagne, Mark King, Kish Chapaneri, Bobby Thompson and E.B. Miles.

## Investments given for Thrift Plan

Investments made by the Thrift Plan trustee during April, 1981, covering employee deductions and company contributions through March, 1981, included the purchase of 57,051 shares of common stock at a total cost of \$656,086.50. The average cost per share was \$11.50.

The trustee also deposited \$199,679.70 in savings with First Security Bank of Beaumont and \$20,214.10 in guaranteed fixed income fund with the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

## Tennis tournament held in May

The fourth annual Live Wires Tennis Tournament was held May 9-10 at the Beaumont Municipal Athletic complex. The tournament was open to all GSU employees and their immediate family members. According to Albert Duffel, the winners, by category, included:

- Men's Open Singles, Harold Sanco Jr.

- Men's A Singles, Steve Norwood
- Men's Novice Singles, Ed Matejick
- Men's Doubles, Albert Duffel and Ward McCurtain
- Women's Open Singles, Dana Sanco
- Women's Novice Singles, Frances Engelbrecht
- Women's Doubles, Dana Sanco and Paige Engelbrecht
- Men's Singles Consolation, Larry Smith
- Men's Doubles Consolation, Ron Thibodeaux and Tommy Goth
- Women's Singles Consolation, Debbie Bakewell



## Live Wires hold feast

When the Live Wires Club held its annual membership dinner on Saturday, March 7, the menu featured shrimp, oysters and all the trimmings.

The group in the picture included the chefs for the event, which was held in the Knights of Columbus Hall in Beaumont.

A free dance was held after the meal.



# ON THE MOVE

**Addison, Van A.**, Baton Rouge, to serviceman-1st class, Elec. T&D

**Albrecht, Robert P.**, Silsbee, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Anderson, Jarrot Jr.**, Zachary, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Arnold, Clayton A.**, Beaumont, to senior accountant, Tax & Accounting Research

**Arnold, Jerry L.**, Baton Rouge, to storekeeper, Elec. T&D

**Barnett, Michael W.**, Beaumont, to mechanic helper, Plant Production

**Beckman, David N.**, Beaumont, to manager regulatory affairs, Rates & Regulatory Affairs

**Bennett, Ronald L.**, Lake Charles, to garage mechanic helper, Elec. T&D

**Beshears, Eric P.**, Louisiana Station, to second fireman, Plant Production

**Blair, Ramon, Jennings**, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Blanchard, Daniel R.**, Nelson Station, to electrical maintenance foreman, Plant Production

**Booker, Otis**, Louisiana Station, to turbine-water plant operator, Plant Production

**Bourne, Leonard P.**, Beaumont, to director-transmission planning, System Engineering

**Bowden, Janice M.**, Beaumont, to stenographer-senior Treasury Department

**Brandon, Randy J.**, Louisiana Station, to turbine engineer, Plant Production

**Braud, Kenneth P.**, Gonzales, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Brown, David E.**, Conroe, to truckdriver, Elec. T&D

**Burbank, Thomas H.**, Beaumont, to senior vice president-Accounting Services and Rates

**Bush, Gregory A.**, Port Allen, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Callahan, Alvin E.**, Port Arthur, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production

**Cambre, Gregory P.**, Louisiana Station, to second fireman, Plant Production

**Cassell, Carol S.**, Beaumont, to confidential records clerk, Accounting Services

**Champagne, Amery J.**, Beaumont, to manager-fuel services, Fuel Services

**Chenault, Harriot E.**, Beaumont, to senior financial analyst, Treasury

**Cockrill, Gary L.**, Nelson Coal, to control operator, Plant Production

**Cole, Melvin S.**, Beaumont, to manager-power supply, System Engineering

**Copeland, Ferrell C.**, Conroe, to test technician-1st class, Plant Production

**Copeland, William G.**, Beaumont, to director-long term finance, Treasury

**Corkran, Burl A.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Cotton, Gene P.**, Sabine Station, to lead chemist, System Production

**Dailey, Rodney**, Orange, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Davenport, David L.**, River Bend Site, to plant security supervisor, River Bend Nuclear Group

**Davis, Donald R.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**DePoy, Marvin E.**, Louisiana Station, to turbine engineer, Plant Production

**Derbonne, Donald R.**, River Bend Site, to lead pre-operation engineer, River Bend Nuclear Group

**Douget, Claude H.**, Sabine Station, to planning coordinator, Plant Production

**Ducote, Michael E.**, formerly of Baton Rouge, to supervisor-relaying & communications, Beaumont T&D Relay & Communications

**Duhon, Fritz J.**, Neches Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production

**Echard, Charles E.**, Willow Glen Station, to test & electrical supervisor, Plant Production

**Evans, Audrey S.**, Beaumont, to general dept. clerk, Office Services

**Evans, Carl J.**, Nelson Station, to mechanic helper, Plant Production

**Foster, Aubry**, Beaumont, to engineering assistant, Engineering Design

**Galloway, Hebert S.**, Beaumont, to senior internal auditor, Internal Audits

**Gammage, James E.**, Neches Station, to shift supervisor, Plant Production

**Ghadia, Suresh K.**, Beaumont, to chemical engineer, Power Plant Engineering & Design

**Gibson, Clinon**, Baton Rouge, to serviceman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Gill, Joycie H.**, Zachary, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting

**Gill, Judith P.**, Beaumont, to engineering assistant, System Operations

**Gomez, Steven B.**, Beaumont, to communications serviceman-1st class, Engineering Design

**Goodman, Tony C.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Graves, Joseph R.**, Willow Glen Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production

**Green, Donald R.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Engineering Design

**Greer, Stuart A.**, Orange, to substation mechanic-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Guillory, Alex Jr.**, Nelson Station, to painter-production, Plant Production

**Guillory, Stacy T.**, Baton Rouge, to relayman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Guinn, Jesse III**, Nelson Coal, to control operator, Plant Production

**Guy, Terry L.**, Conroe, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Harrell, Richard W.**, Nelson Coal, to control operator, Plant Production

**Hebert, Allen R.**, Lafayette, to utility foreman, T&D line

**Hebert, Calvin J.**, formerly of Baton Rouge, to vice president-Financial Services, Beaumont

**Hebert, Paul W.**, Port Arthur, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Henson, Richard E.**, Conroe, to serviceman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Hill, Darius W.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Hollier, Jean L.**, Lafayette, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Holmes, J. W.**, River Bend Site, to coordinator-nuclear training, River Bend Nuclear Group

**Hurlburt, Sonja J.**, Beaumont, to operator's helper, Plant Production

**Huval, Terry J.**, formerly of Baton Rouge, to engineer, Lafayette T&D Engineering

**Jackson, Ronald L.**, Beaumont, to senior utility pilot, System Operations

**Johnson, Ardes E.**, St. Francisville, to second fireman, Plant Production

**Jolissaint, Larry F.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**King, Michael W.**, Beaumont, to substation mechanic-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Kirkpatrick, John R.**, formerly of River Bend Site, to storeroom supervisor, Plant Production, Willow Glen Station

**Kitchens, Van N.**, Orange, to service foreman, T&D Service

**Kordie, Mark R.**, Beaumont, to draftsman, Engineering Design

**Krema, Douglas C.**, Willow Glen Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production

**Kretlein, Frederick W.**, formerly of Conroe, to supervisor-Industrial Relations, Baton Rouge Human Resources

**Kriner, Philip E.**, formerly of Lewis Creek Station, to shift supervisor, Plant Production, Nelson Coal Plant

**Krouse, Emile S.**, Lafayette, to coordinator-Community Relations, Division Operations

**Lackey, Clara K.**, Beaumont, to supervisor-industrial relations records, Human Resources

**Landry, Max B.**, Louisiana Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production

**Lavergne, Michael R.**, Nelson Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production

**Laws, Roger D.**, Louisiana Station, to auxiliary operator, Plant Production

**LeBert, Betty T.**, Beaumont, to senior clerk, Accounting Services

**Ledet, Nathaniel P.**, Lake Charles, to garage mechanic-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Lewis, Larry J.**, Lafayette, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Liddle, Phyllis A.**, Beaumont, to contract representative, Contract Services

**Madden, Larry C.**, Lewis Creek Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production

**Marshall, Larry D.**, Beaumont, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Marshall, Richard A.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Mason, Bobby J.**, Willow Glen, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production

**McManus, Charles S.**, formerly of Hull and Sour Lake, to superintendent Western District, Division Operations, Dayton

**McNabb, John L.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Miller, David L.**, Conroe, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Moore, William E.**, Sabine Station, to electrical maintenance foreman, Plant Production

**Moss, James E.**, formerly of Beaumont, to division vice president-Baton Rouge

**Mouton, Leslie R.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Nauls, Theodore W.**, Beaumont, to operator's helper, Plant Production

**Nelson, Gary L.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D

**Neshitt, Nancy A.**, Beaumont, to supervisor-procurement control, Materials Management

**Norris, Tommy G.**, Beaumont, to section head, System Engineering

**Oates, Harold L.**, Silsbee, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D

**Oden, James M.**, Lake Charles, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Okervall, Billy N.**, formerly of Lewis Creek Station, to test foreman, Plant Production, Willow Glen Station

**Parker, Elton G.**, Willow Glen Station, to planning coordinator, Plant Production

**Peairs, Jerry D.**, Baton Rouge, to serviceman-2nd class, Gas Dept

**Perry, James O.**, formerly of Lewis Creek Station, to project maintenance supervisor, Plant Production, Nelson Station

**Pierce, Charmayne S.**, Beaumont, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting

**Powell, Oddie L.**, formerly of Toledo Bend, to mechanical PMS coordinator, System Production, Nelson Coal Plant

**Pratt, Gary L.**, Conroe, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Ray, Glenn E.**, Port Arthur, to master test technician, Plant Production

**Redeo, Bernard D.**, Conroe, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Renicker, Robert N.**, Beaumont, to assistant treasurer, Financial Services

**Robinson, Michael W.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D

**Rogers, McKinley B.**, Beaumont, to mechanical engineer, Power Plant Engineering & Design

**Saleem, Mohammed A.**, Beaumont, to mechanical engineer, Power Plant Engineering & Design

**Shaver, Kenneth R.**, Conroe, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Smith, Joyce O.**, Beaumont, to general dept. clerk, Elec. T&D

**Sport, Harry C.**, Port Arthur, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D

**Stanley, Donna G.**, Beaumont, to turbine operator, Plant Production

**Staton, John A.**, Conroe, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D

**Stone, Beverly S.**, Beaumont, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting

**Storms, Ralph L.**, Sabine Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production

**Street, Jill B.**, Baton Rouge, to consumer service representative, Division Consumer Services

**Talbot, Douglas R.**, Louisiana Station, to auxiliary operator, Plant Production

**Terry, Eugene J.**, Jennings, to helper, T&D, Helper Crews

**Thibodeaux, Daniel J.**, Lake Charles, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Thompson, Theresa S.**, Conroe, to engineering helper, Elec. T&D

**Thompson, Yvonne Y.**, formerly of Lake Charles, accountant, to Baton Rouge Division Accounting

**Van Winkle, Mark D.**, Conroe, to apprentice, Elec. T&D

**Victorian, Davis J.**, Nelson Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production

**Wallace, Marlin E.**, Louisiana Station, to turbine engineer, Plant Production



# 1981 Graduates



**Mickey Alberto**  
Beaumont Charlton-Pollard  
Son of Pat and Mary Brady  
Production, Human Resources  
Beaumont



**Dean Dickschat**  
Navasota High School  
Son of Betty T. Dickschat  
Customer Accounting  
Navasota



**Kenneth Griffin**  
South Park High School  
Son of Charlotte Griffin  
Training  
Beaumont



**Lisa Darlene Lovett**  
Sam Houston State University  
Daughter of Clata McCarver  
Division Accounting  
New Caney



**Terri Thompson**  
Magnolia High School  
Daughter of Kaletta Thompson  
Engineering  
Conroe



**Ronny Amoroso**  
Lee High School  
Grandson of Carl Courtney  
Plant Production  
Louisiana Station



**Jody Downs**  
Vidor High School  
Son of Devena Downs  
Records Management  
Beaumont



**Paul Lark Hebert**  
Port Barre High School  
Son of Allen Hebert  
Electric T&D  
Lafayette



**Karen Marts**  
West Feliciana High School  
Daughter of Robert A. Marts  
River Bend Nuclear Group  
River Bend Site



**Butch Werner**  
Port Neches-Groves High School  
Son of Linda Werner  
Legal Services  
Beaumont



**Richard A. Blair**  
Forest Park High School  
Son of Richard A. Blair  
Computer Applications  
Beaumont



**Susan Draper**  
Forest Park High School  
Daughter of E. Linn Draper  
Executive Department  
Beaumont



**Stephen Jenkins**  
Louisiana State University  
Grandson of Cecil Jenkins Sr.  
Retiree  
Baton Rouge



**Cynthia Norris**  
Livonia High School  
Daughter of Roosevelt Norris Jr.  
Plant Production  
Louisiana Station



**Mark Englade**  
South Park High School  
Son of Sharon Englade  
Public Affairs  
Beaumont



**Leslie Anne Bodden**  
Tara High School  
Daughter of Doris S. Bodden  
Customer Accounting  
Baton Rouge



**Kevin Fuller**  
Nederland High School  
Son of Kathleen Fuller  
Executive Department  
Port Arthur



**Dianna Faith Landry**  
Sam Houston State University  
Daughter of Dick Landry  
Consumer Services  
Conroe



**Cathy Rosas**  
Thomas Jefferson High School  
Daughter of Bertha Rosas  
Customer Accounting  
Port Arthur



**John and Kathy Scott**  
University of Houston Law School  
Son and daughter-in-law  
John J. Scott  
Power Plant Engineering and Design  
Beaumont



**Bruce Mark Dazat**  
Sulphur High School  
Son of Roy Dazat  
Plant Production  
Nelson Station



**Cynthia S. Green**  
Forest Park High School  
Daughter of R. T. Green  
Accounting Services  
Beaumont



**Cheryl Lawley**  
Lamar University  
Daughter of Jim Wilder  
Materials Management  
Beaumont



**Janet Lynn Spurlock**  
Woodville High School  
Daughter of Jimmy D. Spurlock  
Electric T&D  
Woodville



**Kathrin Ann Dawson**  
Conroe High School  
Daughter of Earnest F. Dawson Jr.  
Consumer Services  
Conroe



**Joseph William Holland Jr., M.D.**  
Texas Tech Medical School  
Son of Fay Holland  
Office Services  
Beaumont



## Electric cars join NY fleet

Forty-three electric cars, trucks and vans are being added to New York state's fleet. Electric vehicles, purchased from South Coast Technology, Detroit, will be used for short-range travel by state offices in Westchester County and Port Authority of New York/New Jersey.

The \$700,000 purchase was shared by the Department of Energy (DOE) and State Energy Research and Development Authority. Cars, built with Volkswagen bodies, have 23-horsepower engines and run on 18 six-volt lead-acid batteries.

State officials estimate each recharging will cost about 75 cents — a considerable savings over current gasoline prices.

## Study shows possible savings

American consumers would save about \$1.5 trillion (in 1980 dollars) over the next 25 years if restraints on nuclear development are removed, according to researchers at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

VPI Professor Leo A. Rapoport and research associate B. J. Style, in cooperation with David Hirshfeld of Ketron, Inc., a consulting firm in Arlington, Va., reached that figure as part of a study of the cost of present environmental protection policies on the development of energy sources in the non-Communist world. Rapoport delivered the paper at a February symposium held in Dallas by the Society of Petroleum Engineers and the American Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

"The overall most significant finding of the analysis is that adherence to the current, relatively severe environmental protection policy posture would cost U.S. consumers a total of about \$5.2 trillion (in constant 1980 dollars) over the next 25 years," the study says. The amount which is equivalent to several years' Gross National Product (GNP), does not reflect downstream impacts such as inflation and reduced economic growth, it says.

Of the total, the study says "\$1.5 trillion could be saved by reinstating the development of nuclear power." The saving represents the difference between limiting nuclear power to the reactors presently on line and permitting a total of about 390,000 megawatts by the end of the century.

## TMI cleanup a necessity, official says

A representative of the nation's investor-owned electric utilities told Congress in early May that it is in our nation's best interest that the cleanup of Three Mile Island, Unit 2, be resolved.

"While the cleanup of the TMI-2 system will be complex and difficult, we have the technical expertise to accomplish the task," said T. Louis Austin Jr., chairman of the board of Texas Utilities Company and chairman of an industry Task Force on Nuclear Institutional Issues.

Speaking before the House Interior Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment, Austin said, "Central to the task force's analysis of the TMI cleanup situation, which the Edison Electric Institute board supported, was a conclusion that not only the rate-payers of General Public Utilities, the states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey and the federal government have a stake in the cleanup of TMI-2, but the electric utility industry also has a vital interest, and consequently all the interested parties, including the electric utility industry, should be called upon to participate financially in some proportion."



## GSU broadens financial base with Prudential acquisition

Gulf States' early May acquisition of Prudential Drilling Company of Houston represented a part of the company's strategy for coping with inflation.

Inflationary times are especially difficult for capital-intensive industries like utilities, and Gulf States and other utilities have begun trying to soften the impact of rising prices and high interest rates by broadening their financial bases.

Generally, this means moving into less regulated businesses, such as oil and gas development and other energy-related activities. The energy field makes sense from a diversification standpoint because electric utilities have some experience and expertise that they would not have if they were getting into micro-technology or some other business totally unrelated to utility operations.

The goal in diversifying is to improve overall corporate earnings and increase the value of the company's stock, which should facilitate the financing of the company's utility operations and construction activities.

GSU already had a subsidiary, Varibus Corp., which has been involved in limited oil and gas exploration and development during the last decade and has developed reserves of 10 billion cubic feet of gas and one million barrels of oil.

In the fall of 1980, the GSU board of directors decided that a deeper commitment to diversification was necessary if the company's financial base was going to be broadened significantly.

The board decided that \$10 million to \$15 million annually would be dedicated during the next five years for oil and gas exploration and the company said at the time that several potential acquisitions were being considered.

On May 6, Gulf States and Prudential signed a stock exchange agreement in which GSU agreed to exchange 588,000 shares of its common stock for all of Prudential's common stock, a transaction with an estimated value of nearly \$7 million.

The Houston-based drilling company is involved in natural gas exploration in Southeast Texas. It was responsible for the discovery of the Elwood Field in Chambers County in which it has about a 5.5 percent interest.

In addition, Prudential has interests in 26 other producing wells in Texas and Louisiana and holds oil and gas leases in Southeast Texas.

A majority interest in Prudential is owned by Jim and George Dishman, two Beaumont brothers who are knowledgeable and experienced in the oil and gas business.

Since the acquisition announcement, GSU has announced that the company will be led by Zeb D. Alford, formerly of Hollis, N.H., who, as president and director of Prudential, will maintain a Houston office.

Alford, a native of McComb, Miss., was president of New England Energy Inc. of Westborough, Mass., formed in 1974 as the energy subsidiary of New England Electric Systems.

Prior to necessary regulatory approval and final closing of the transaction, George A. Dishman Jr. will become chairman of the Prudential board.

Gulf States customers will not finance the acquisition because the state regulatory commissions exclude investments in non-utility areas when allocating costs during rate cases. In the long run, however, GSU customers may benefit if diversification strengthens the company's financial standing.

Consequently, employees, too, would benefit from an improvement in corporate earnings.



## PLAIN TALKS

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# Q. Is it mostly the poor or elderly who pay their bills late?

# A.

A survey conducted recently showed that about 70 percent of delinquent utility customers have incomes over \$10,000 a year, and that close to 40 percent of them make more than \$20,000. On the other hand, of those who habitually pay on time, 55 percent are over 50 years of age and 25 percent earn less than \$10,000. So it seems that most of the people who pay their utility bills late aren't poor or old — they're simply irresponsible.

